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STORY OF THE MISSION OF STIRLING.

THE Mission of Stirling is one of the oldest in the Diocese of Ontario, and used to be looked upon as a desirable preferment. It embraced originally the villages of Stirling, Marmora and Madoc, and the Townships of Rawdon, Marmora, Madoc and parts of the Townships of Sydney and Huntingdon. In 1861, during the incumbency of the late Rev. J. A. Preston, Madoc was constituted a separate Mission. The Incumbent of Trenton used to hold monthly or fortnightly services at the village of Frankford, in the township of Sydney, half way between Stirling and Trenton; but, in or about 1860, he abandoned this Station, and the Rev. Mr. Preston took it up. From thence forward up to 1876, Frankford formed part of the Mission of Stirling. The congregation there was always small, and the Incumbents of Stirling received little or no remuneration.

In 1859, the congregation of Stirling built a beautiful Gothic Church, at a cost of \$5,000. At its completion, the building was mortgaged for the sum of \$1,200, bearing interest at nine per cent. per annum. From one cause or another, this debt hung over the congregation up to 1877, when it was paid off during the incumbency of the Rev. F. L. Stephenson, now of Almonte. Up to 1874 the Mission of Stirling was going on well, and things were working harmoniously; but now came a sad change, and the (shall we not say) almost ruin of the Church in this part of the Diocese.

In 1872, the Rev. Mr. Grout removed from Stirling to the parish of Carleton Place. During his incumbency of Stirling, which lasted seven years, the Mission comprised the villages of Stirling, Marmora and Frankford, together with the adjoining townships. To him succeeded Rev. John Halliwell, who, up to 1871, had been a preacher of the Episcopal Methodists. He took charge of the Mission as Mr. Grout left it. It was now felt that efforts should be made to pay off the mortgage on the Church. A subscription list was circulated with this object in view. On the 12th July, 1874, a pic-nic was given by the Orangemen, the proceeds of which were to go towards the Church debt. This pic-nic was numerously attended, and a large amount is supposed to have been received. At the previous Easter Vestry Meeting Mr. Halliwell, at his urgent request, was appointed Treasurer of the Church. He also undertook the Sexton's duties. So the whole of the Church finances were at his disposal. After the pic-nic he announced publicly from his place in the Church that the debt had been reduced by \$650. This same year Mr. Halliwell had commenced the erection of a handsome house, his own private property. The congregation of St. John's Church, Stirling, being under the impression that they were paying off their debt, were well satisfied, and Mr. Halliwell was very popular. But, just at this juncture, one of the Churchwardens, who was also one of the collateral securities for the debt on the Church, received a letter from the mortgagee stating that neither principal nor interest had been paid for some time, and demanding an explanation. The Churchwarden was astonished at such a statement, but came to the conclusion that the money had been deposited in the Bank at Belleville and was lying there. But, upon enquiry being made, it was found that no money had been deposited to the account of the debt. The Churchwarden next privately requested an explanation from Mr. Halliwell, but was curtly informed that "It was none of his business." A meeting of the Vestry was called, and the two Churchwardens were appointed to audit Mr. Halliwell's accounts. But Mr. Halliwell refused to submit the accounts to them. Several other Vestry meetings were called, but Mr. Halliwell would never attend. On a certain Sunday, from his place in the

Church, he informed the congregation that he dismissed one of the Churchwardens from office, and that certain other members with their families were cut off from the privileges of the Church on account of their conduct.

And now comes in the saddest part. Finding that he was fast losing the respect and confidence of the congregation of St. John's Church, Stirling, Mr. Halliwell industriously set to work to sow dissension and stir up ill-feeling between that congregation and the other congregations in the parish. And he succeeded only too well. The charges made against him were so serious that outsiders refused to credit them. He represented himself as persecuted by a few leading men in the Stirling congregation, whom he held up to public odium. He had placed lamps in St. John's Church, which were partly paid for by the congregation; he took up a part of the floor of the Chancel, and into the hole thus made he lowered a common three feet long stove, which he called a furnace, and asserted that the money received had been spent in providing lamps and a furnace for the Church. He called a meeting in the Church, which was packed by his adherents from all parts of the Mission, and to this meeting he proceeded to vindicate himself. His vindication was received with stamping of feet and other noises most unseemly and unprecedented in the house of God, and this too in spite of the protests of one of the Churchwardens who was present.

Utterly disgusted, the entire congregation to a man ceased to attend the Church, and it was closed for over two years.

Where, it may be asked, was the Bishop all this time? How was it possible that he would permit such a state of things? We are forced to confess that, although complaint after complaint was made to him, set forth in writing and signed by every member of the Vestry, his Lordship took no notice, so far as the congregation knew, until 1875, when Archdeacon Parnell visited the Mission. He undertook to investigate the matter, but in rather a novel manner. He listened to Mr. Halliwell's story, accepted Mr. Halliwell's vouchers, decided that he owed the Church sixty dollars, and wound up by telling the congregation to be good, for-

get the past and go to Church. But not in this way could the matter be settled. The congregation, now seeing that it was vain to appeal to the Bishop, appealed to the courts of law. The Court of Chancery gave judgment against Mr. Halliwell, notwithstanding he appealed three times.

On the conclusion of this suit, the congregation forwarded a memorial to the Bishop charging Mr. Halliwell (in addition to their former charges) with having made false statements under oath on several occasions in the recent suit, and requesting his Lordship to issue a Commission in accordance with the provisions of Canon VIII. This the Bishop declined to do, alleging as a reason that he had been advised by the Chancellor of the Diocese, Dr. Henderson, that the charges against Mr. Halliwell amounted to perjury, and, as this was a crime punishable by law, the Courts of the Church could not try a clergyman for it. If this be the case, it is hard to see any use for the Canon at all, and unless the parishioners undertake to bring their clergyman to justice (which they are for the most part unwilling to do) we may have to witness men charged with grievous crimes ministering at our altars and undertaking to preach to the people the unsearchable riches of Christ. We should have thought that rather than countenance such a thing as that, a Bishop would run almost any risk. Other Bishops think or act differently. Bishop Helmuth at once suspended a clergyman in his Diocese who was accused of forgery, but afterwards acquitted; and, in the Buckingham case, Bishop Fulford did not delay suspending the Incumbent, though he too was afterwards acquitted in a court of law. And the words of the Canon (Canon VIII., Sec. 2) make no such exception: "That in every case of any Clerk in Holy Orders * * * * * who may be charged with any crime, * * * * * or concerning whom there may exist scandal or evil report, it shall be lawful for the Bishop, on the application of the party complaining thereof, or, if he shall think fit, of his mere motion, to issue a Commission." * * * * * There was ample power in the Bishop's hands to issue a Commission; but, as after events proved, for some reason or other he was determined *not* to do so. It is not very creditable to the

Diocese to have a man ministering in one of its parishes over whose head hangs such a dreadful charge; and it would seem to be the duty of every Churchman, but especially of every clergyman, and chiefly of the Rev. Mr. Halliwell himself, to demand of the Bishop that this terrible charge should be investigated. If the charge be false and malicious, as is alleged, one would think that Mr. Halliwell would proceed by law against one or more of the parties who have made the charge over their signatures, for defamation of character.

In April, 1876, the Bishop seemed to be alive to the gravity of the situation, for he sent the Rev. F. L. Stephenson to the parish, and the Mission Board professed to withdraw Mr. Halliwell's grant. But Mr. Halliwell stood his ground, and continued, in defiance of the Bishop, to minister to such as would receive him. No intimation came from his Lordship to any of the stations outside of Stirling, and the people actually could not tell whether Mr. Stephenson was not an intruder, or whether the Bishop found any fault with Mr. Halliwell. At this crisis the Vestry of St John's Church, Stirling, failing to obtain any redress from the Bishop, presented a memorial to the Synod praying for an investigation into the charges against Mr. Halliwell. This memorial was referred to a Committee consisting of the Rev. Mr. Lewin, Incumbent of Prescott, Mr. Shannon, editor of the *Kingston Daily News*, and Mr. Radenhurst, barrister, of Perth. This Committee carefully investigated the case, and examined witnesses on both sides. The Report recommended that a Commission should be issued to investigate the case. But the Synod was adjourned before the Report could be presented, and when it was called for at the Synod in June, 1877, it was found that it had been suppressed, and did not appear as it should have done in the journal of the Synod for that year. Moreover, the memorial to the Synod, which had been received and which was in the custody of the Synod, was handed back to one of the delegates from Stirling, by some person unknown to him, just as he was getting on the train at the Grand Trunk station.

On the afternoon of Friday, 23rd June, 1876, just after

the Synod had been adjourned, the Rev. F. L. Stephenson, in company with the two delegates from Stirling, waited upon the Bishop, and represented to his Lordship that it was necessary, in order that Mr. Stephenson should be made right in the eyes of the people, that he should have his License to the Mission, and also asked him what he proposed to do in the case of Mr. Halliwell. His Lordship at once replied that within three weeks he would send Mr. Stephenson his License for the *whole* Mission, "And," added he, "*to-morrow* I will silence Mr. Halliwell." The delegates returned home thinking that now at last there was hope that matters were about to take a turn for the better. But they were doomed to be disappointed. On the following Sunday, 25th June, 1876, immediately after morning service, Mr. Halliwell's son brought a letter from his father to Mr. Stephenson. This letter informed Mr. Stephenson that the Bishop had appointed him (Mr. Halliwell) to the parish of Hillier and Wellington; that the Mission of Stirling had been divided, and that Frankford, together with a certain \$1,000, had been given to the Incumbent of Trenton, Rev. Wm. Bleasdel. This information Mr. Stephenson and the congregation, remembering what the Bishop had said on the preceding Friday afternoon, at once considered false. However, one of the congregation volunteered to go to Trenton at once and find out the truth from Mr. Bleasdel. The whole congregation waited for his return. On his return, to the astonishment of all, he said that the information contained in Mr. Halliwell's letter was true. Mr. Stephenson then told the people that he was sincerely sorry for them and for the Church in Stirling, but that after what had occurred he could no longer hope to remain with them, and that he resigned the Mission. But the people prevailed upon him to see the Bishop before deciding finally. Accordingly he, accompanied by one of the Churchwardens, Mr. James Boldrick, started on Monday morning for Kingston, hoping to see the Bishop there. But his Lordship had left on Saturday for Isle Dorval. They saw Archdeacon Parnell, however, and he undertook to communicate with the Bishop. Mr. Stephenson sent his resignation to the Bishop, and went to Perth, where his family were still residing. The efforts of Archdeacon Par-

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nell seemed to be successful, for, on the 30th of June, the Rév. F. L. Stephenson received the following letter from the Bishop :

ISLE DORVAL, 28th June, '76.

MY DEAR MR. STEPHENSON,—I received yours of the 26th, and in reply write to say that I have placed the whole management of the Stirling difficulty, unreservedly, in Archdeacon Parnell's hands. He knows my mind on the subject, and has gauged accordingly the merits of the case.

I would hereby say that, in my opinion, the \$1,000 cannot be taken away from Frankford ; and, moreover, I have no desire to attach Frankford to Trenton, and nothing definite has yet been done on the subject, except in an informal conversation with Canon Bleasdel.

I am, faithfully yours,

(Signed,) J. T. ONTARIO.

The matter then was left to Archdeacon Parnell to settle. He settled it satisfactorily ; for as soon as he received authority from the Bishop, he telegraphed at once both to the Stirling Churchwardens and to Mr. Stephenson that the Mission was to remain as it had been, and that no part was to be given to Trenton. With this understanding Mr. Stephenson again consented to take charge of the Mission. But in the following September the Bishop apparently forgot all about his letter to Mr. Stephenson, and Archdeacon Parnell's settlement of the difficulty, for he gave the station of Frankford and the benefit of the \$1000 to the Incumbent of Trenton. Indeed, it would seem as if Fate, or Bishop Lewis, had decreed to destroy the church utterly in this part of the Diocese. Mr. Halliwell was in close proximity, and was and is determined to keep the strife alive. Whenever there appears to be any prospect of peace he comes into the Mission and stirs up strife afresh. During the period of Mr. Stephenson's incumbency Mr. Halliwell came into the parish and performed official acts, such as marrying and burying. He continued for a week at a time preaching the gospel of discord, baptizing, etc. Mr. Stephenson complained to the Bishop, but could get no satisfaction. After Frankford and the \$1000 had been

diverted from the Mission a second time, Mr. Stephenson consented to remain and try and save St. John's Church, which had been placed in chancery, and was in imminent danger of being sold. Great efforts were made and liberal subscriptions given during the winter and spring of 1876-77. Application was made to the S. P. C. K. for assistance, and a grant of £50 stg. was made by the Society, but, although the necessary certificate was given that that amount would clear the church of debt, and although the Churchwardens were ready to deed the church to the Synod, that money is still withheld. However, once the mortgage on the church was paid off, it became evident that Mr. Stephenson was very desirous of leaving a Mission where he only met discouragement at every point from those from whom he had a right to look for support and encouragement, and where he had not the protection usually given by the Bishop against meddlers from outside the parish. There is no doubt but that Mr. Halliwell's efforts to set the people of Frankford against their brethren in Stirling were ably seconded by parties in Trenton who were desirous of securing for that already well endowed parish, with its small congregation, the income to be derived from the famous \$1000, beside whatever the congregation was disposed to contribute.

But it has been said that it would be monstrous to force the church people of Frankford into union with Stirling against their will. This has been put forward as an unanswerable argument by those who are interested. It might be replied that the Village of Marmora is just as much opposed to the union, and yet nothing has been done to detach it. But the truth is, this is not the question at all. The real question is the depriving the Mission of Stirling, a poor Mission, and poorer now than ever (thanks to the machinations of Mr. Halliwell), of what used to form a considerable item in the clergyman's salary. Let the church people of Frankford join on with Trenton if they will, but wherefore should this money go with them? What claim have they on it? Without it they will find but a poor welcome from the Incumbent of Trenton. Seventeen years ago, when Mr. Bleasdel threw that station overboard, as well as the other station on the Belleville road whose church

now forms a horse-shed for St. George's Church in the Village of Trenton, the Frankford church people were glad enough to obtain services from the Missionary at Stirling.

As far as we can understand, the Bishop maintains that the \$1000 is a sacred trust given to him for the express purpose of endowing this particular congregation at Frankford by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, out of the public chest. The Assistant Commissioner, however, gives a very rational and by no means sentimental account of the matter, which effectually clears the Hon. R. W. Scott, the Commissioner, of any imputation of misappropriating the funds of the Province. The \$1000 in question, instead of being a present to the Bishop, was a sum of money paid by certain squatters upon two lots in the Township of Sydney, (a Dorchester glebe), and which they were obliged to pay, in order to extinguish the claim of the Synod, before they could obtain patents from the Crown. The money really belonged to the Synod, to dispose of for the best interests of the church. In those days, however, when Synods are looked upon as mere ornamental appendages to church dignitaries, it was not thought worth while to lay the matter before this dignified body, so the Secretary, as acting for and representing the Synod, with a stroke of his pen creates Frankford a Rectory, and when people read the Synod Journal for 1876 they were surprised to find a new Rectory had sprung into existence in the Diocese.

In May, 1877, the Rev. Mr. Stephenson addressed a letter to the Crown Lands Office in Toronto, asking for information concerning the lands in question. He received the following reply, which speaks for itself :

DEPARTMENT OF CROWN LANDS,
Sales and Free Grant Branch,
TORONTO, 29th May, 1877.

THE REV. F. L. STEPHENSON, }
St. John's Church, Stirling. }

SIR,—With regard to the enquiry you make by your letter of the 23rd inst., I beg to state that the lands commonly known as "Dorchester Glebes" were set apart in the early surveys of the Province under an order of the 17th

February, 1789, for religious purposes, without any other specific appropriations, and apparently were in many instances treated as ordinary Crown Lands, when one-seventh of the public lands were set apart as Clergy Reserves under the Statute 31 of Geo. III., ch. 31 (1791), when several were thus selected, as was the case with the two lots (Nos. 19 and 20 in the 6th concession) in the Township of Sydney, to which you allude.

These two lots, when inspected as ordinary Clergy Reserves in 1844, were found to be in the occupation of certain parties under leases from the Rev. John Greer, of Belleville.

After considerable delay, an arrangement was effected with the Synod by which the several occupants were secured in their holdings, and obtained patents accordingly.

Your obedient servant,
(Signed,) THOS. H. JOHNSON,
Ass't Commissioner.

The document of which the foregoing is a copy tells us all that is to be told about the so-called "Frankford endowment." The \$1000, so often referred to above, was the price paid by the occupants of lots Nos. 19 and 20 in the 6th Concession of the Township of Sydney to purchase the claims of the Synod.

This \$1000 was invested by the Secretary of the Synod at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum, and this interest was paid regularly to the Incumbent of the Mission of Stirling up to July, 1876. When Mr. Stephenson was appointed to the Mission in June, 1876, no one doubted but that he was to serve the whole Mission, as his predecessors had done. The Mission was poor and in debt; there was no parsonage house, and no prospect of obtaining one; nor was there any house in the village which could be rented suitable for a parsonage. One of the parishioners, George E. Bull, Esq., offered a fine site and half an acre of ground, and application was made to the Synod in 1876 to grant this \$1000 to assist in building a parsonage, the congregation binding itself to put up a building, at a cost of \$2000, exclusive of the value of the land, to keep it insured, and to deed it to

the Synod. In this way it was thought that the \$1000 would yield a better income to the clergyman. The application was granted by the Synod, as may be seen by reference to the journal of the Synod for 1876 at page 1417. No objection was made by the Bishop at the time. It has since been stated that the favorable report of the committee to whom the application was referred was owing to the information laid before them. This, of course, would be true in any case, but the only information given to the committee (as those who were present can prove) was given by the clerical Secretary, Archdeacon Parnell, and that information was perfectly true, viz., that the \$1000 in question was entirely at the disposal of the Synod. The very next day, however, the Bishop, utterly ignoring the action of the Synod, undertook to hand over this money to the Incumbent of Trenton, Rev. Mr. Bleasdel. However, this action of his Lordship was protested against on the part of the congregation of St. John's Church, Stirling, and the money still remains, together with accumulated interest thereon since July, 1876, in the custody of the Secretary of the Synod.

The utter injustice of giving this money, or any part of it, to the Incumbent of Trenton, or to assist in paying the stipend of his curate, is manifest to any person at all acquainted with the facts of the case. In the first place, Mr. Bleasdel gave up Frankford 17 years ago, leaving the people to obtain the services of the church the best way they could. With the exception of Frankford, he holds no services outside of the Village of Trenton. The congregation attending St. George's Church, Trenton, is small—scarcely as many as 120. The church population of the Village of Trenton by the census of 1871 is given as 456, or about 92 families. The work to be done is therefore necessarily small. Let us see what this work costs the church. First there is a fine parsonage house. Next, by turning to page 1433, journal of Synod for 1876, we find there is an endowment of \$5,870. Again, at page 1409 we find that the Rev. Mr. Bleasdel receives \$486.64 a year from the Commutation Fund, and it is to be supposed that the congregation of St. George's Church, Trenton, pay their

clergyman something. But this is not all that the church people of Trenton cost the church. Mr. Bleasdel has a Curate, the Rev. Mr. Stanton, and the Rev. Mr. Stanton receives \$400 a year from the Commutation Fund. Now look at the Mission of Stirling, a Mission thirty miles long by ten miles wide at least. In the Township of Rawdon there are (according to the last census) 810 members of the church; in Stirling Village, 162; in the Township of Marmora, 406, besides those in the parts of the Townships of Seymour, Sydney and Huntingdon which come under the charge of the missionary. Each Sunday he has to officiate three times. What is his remuneration? No parsonage, no endowment, the only certainty \$200 a year from the Mission Fund. The people to whom he has to minister are for the most part poor people, and people who have been shamefully neglected by the church. The census of 1861 gave us 1059 members of the church in Rawdon, 269 in Stirling Village, and 515 in Marmora. Will not the next census in 1881 show a much larger decrease? The people of Trenton have services twice each Sunday; they have two clergymen to attend to their spiritual wants. In five years, the people of Stirling have had their Church opened for fifteen months only. Gentlemen of the Synod of the Diocese of Ontario, lay and clerical, look at these things!—they are *facts*—and then say are you going to take away this wretched pittance from the poor Mission of Stirling to add it to the already large revenues of Trenton. Let the people of Frankford be joined to Trenton if they choose; but surely the Incumbent of Trenton can afford to minister to them without any additional endowment. Let the Bishop come among the Stirling people and find out for himself. It is going on seven years now since his Lordship visited this Mission. Surely, had he come during the time of the trouble, much evil might have been averted. It is now over a year since the Rev. Mr. Stephenson left the Mission, during that time there have been at least four applications, all of which have been either put off or refused. In one case a clergyman applied for the mission and his application was seconded by the Churchwardens, but he too was refused. The Mission is now completely disorganized. It is useless to seek for any guarantee of salary for anyone who

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comes. The people are disheartened and disgusted, and many of them have left the Church.

Gentlemen of the Synod, this is the story of the Mission of Stirling. You are the supreme power in the Diocese, if you choose to assert your rights. Do you know of any remedy in this case, or preventative that the like may not occur again?

GEO. E. BULL,
JAS. BOLDRICK,
Churchwardens,
St. John's Church, Stirling.

STIRLING, 13th November, 1878.

The above document was submitted to a full informal Vestry of St. John's Church, on 12th Nov., and a resolution carried unanimously that the Churchwardens have it printed and distributed to all the clergy and lay members who compose the Synod of Ontario Diocese.